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UNITED KINGDOM.

IRELAND.

By Consul Hunter Sharp, Belfast.

The year 1915 was an abnormal one in the Belfast district. Trade conditions underwent an entire change, and the large majority of important concerns where shipbuilding or iron work of any description is carried on were employed almost entirely on Government work. The engineering and machine-making concerns were also engaged much the same way.

There has been a scarcity of labor in some of the industries. Where work has been plentiful, increases of wages have been conceded, and the result is that those having regular employment have had much more money at their disposal than in the past. As against the increased wages, however, higher prices have had to be paid for the necessaries of life.

Shipbuilding and Harbor Improvements.

In regard to shipbuilding, the output of the two local yards has been unusually small, consisting of six steamers with an aggregate of 26,318 tons, as compared with 15 vessels of 231,235 tons in 1914. It is reported, however, that these yards have been intrusted with considerable other work, and this has given employment to the major portion of fully 25,000 men.

The Belfast Harbor Commission did not undertake any large schemes for harbor improvement or development during last year, and confined itself to the carrying out of such works as were found to be absolutely necessary for the immediate requirements of the port.

Mechanical Engineering and Foundry Work—Motor Industry.

Local engineering and foundry concerns were busy all the year, but the ordinary commercial work was practically restricted to orders and contracts in connection with the maintenance of the mechanical equipment in the textile and other industries of Ulster.

The electrical engineering department had an average year. Some important installations of both lighting and power were made. Electricity is steadily growing in favor for power purposes, and when conditions become normal it is thought that there will be a boom in electrical enterprise.

The exigencies of the war demanded increased numbers of motor cars, and while the output was accelerated, a small margin was left to supply the wants of the general public. Possibly the number of cars for this purpose could have been increased but for the fact that it became almost impossible to obtain the necessary raw material.

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One of the greatest difficulties was the shortage of magnetos. A reliable substitute for the German article, however, was soon found in magnetos of British and American manufacture. Trouble was also experienced in obtaining ball bearings, and in some instances this was surmounted by firms installing special machinery for manufacturing supplies. One of the outstanding features of the year was the enhanced price of secondhand cars, brought about by the limited supply of new vehicles. Local automobile engineers, however, are reported to have enjoyed a fair measure of success.

The Building Trade.

The year was quiet in the local building trade. High price of materials, the scarcity and enhanced cost of labor, together with the dearness of money, have all contributed to discourage building enterprise of a speculative character. Skilled workmen are now receiving a uniform wage of 18 cents an hour; the pay of the painters has been brought up to that figure, while an advance was also granted to the hod men and ground laborers.

Steel beams have increased in price since the commencement of the war from $34.07 to $63.26, or $68.13 a ton; timber has also advanced in about the same proportion, and even at the higher charges it is almost impossible to procure supplies. The price of bricks has increased by about 25 per cent and cement has increased by $2.45 per ton. The plans passed by the city corporation during 1915 represented buildings of less than half the value of those for which plans were passed in the year before the war. There is little prospect of any substantial improvement in this branch of the trade, although it is thought that after the war a number of problems in connection with the development of the city will have to be faced.

Satisfactory Year for the Making-up Trade—Rope Works.

The making-up industry has developed into many different branches. Notwithstanding the shortage of labor and transport difficulties, manufacturers generally had a satisfactory year. Many of the larger firms were busily engaged on Government contracts. It is claimed that a number of firms are now turning out lingerie of the daintiest character, and that local manufacturers have been able to secure valuable orders for goods that in previous years were made in continental countries.

The clothing trade has experienced a good year, while the apron, pinafore, and overall trade is reported specially active. There are practically no stocks on hand, and orders are said to be larger than for years.

At the ropeworks, where some 3,500 hands are employed, the machinery ran at full pressure throughout the year, the only trouble being the scarcity of raw materials. It is reported that nearly two-thirds of the entire production of the works were intended directly or indirectly for war purposes. A specially made string for use with the reaper-binder has formed an important feature in the output of the works, and each year an increasing demand for this production has to be met.

Increased Consumption of Tobacco—Aerated Water Trade.

The two local tobacco factories were busy throughout the year, and their output was probably the largest on record. The Govern-

ment continued its purchases of tobacco on a large scale for the Army and Navy, and these supplies were supplemented by gifts from the people. A noticeable feature has been the popularity of the cigarette with the soldiers, resulting in a considerable increase in the manufacture of cigarettes. The amount of duty paid on tobacco is reported as being the highest in the history of the port.

In common with all other branches of industrial enterprise, the mineral water trade has been more or less influenced by the war, more particularly as such manufactures come under the head of luxuries. Owing to the increased cost of materials used in the manufacture of aerated waters, and also the difficulty in obtaining supplies, combined with the increased freight rates, manufacturers have had to raise their prices.

Condition of the Linen Industry—Prices of Flax.

At the beginning of 1915 the outlook for the supply of raw material for the linen industry was not encouraging. Cargoes of flax, however, arrived throughout the season with more regularity than was expected, and spinners were able to meet the requirements of the trade fairly well. It is stated that some spinners extended the working hours, owing to the urgency of Government orders.

The chief features of the linen trade were the uncertainty with regard to adequate supplies of raw material, the high prices ruling for yarns, the support derived from Government orders, and the impetus given to the production of a certain percentage of goods that no longer admit of the distinctive trade description of "pure linen."

Prices of flax virtually doubled during the 12 months. Large supplies of Russian flax were received, while Dutch supplies were small, and there were only odd lots of Belgian flaxes received, for which high prices were paid, touching even $1,460 per ton. Russian flaxes were on a basis of about $389 per ton; Dutch, $1,314; and Irish as high as $1,168.

Limited Stocks of Linen Yarns.

It is stated that stocks of pure linen yarns were never so small as at present. This is attributable in a large measure to the decreased production and the accompanying high prices. The substitution of cotton or other raw material has reached an unprecedented proportion.

Yarns for cambric cloth have moved slowly since August. The stock of weft yarns between 80s and 130s, although reduced, is not cleared up, but warp yarns are in a small compass, as these are used largely for aeroplane wefts.

The damask end of the trade has probably suffered most, and although damask looms have turned practically onto "all cotton," it has not affected the position of spinners.

As to the course of the market, prices were steady at the beginning of last year, and up until April continued quiet with little business passing as regards both line and tow wefts. In June there was a slight declining tendency, but in September, prices for line wefts were firm with a fair business, and for tows there was a considerable demand. Since then the market has been most irregular, line wefts firm in prices, and medium numbers—25s to 60s—were freely bought at current rates. At the close of the year steadiness prevailed with a small volume of business.

The demand has been variable for linen manufactures, as high prices deterred merchants from replenishing their stocks until forced to do so to meet competition. Government orders have been and continue to be accountable for considerable employment in the trade. Advanced prices for yarns have been responsible for stopping the manufacture of various lines of linen goods, some of which, over a series of years, were regarded as the steadiest branch of the business. This is notable in the case of linen damask, as large numbers of looms have been turned from making pure linen varieties to that of all cotton or union cloths.

United States Leading as Market for Linen Goods.

The United States occupies first place in the purchases of linen goods, taking more than half of the total exports in this line manufactured in this district. Anticipating scarcity of goods, American buyers purchased heavily during the latter part of 1914, and since then prices have greatly increased. Stocks of linens of all kinds are being rapidly bought up, and new orders "to make" have been placed at prices that buyers would not have believed a year ago they could afford to pay and make any profit. Dress linens would have been a strong line if dyes had been available to give the shades required. Heavy bleached linens for embroidery and dress purposes have had a good sale. Shipments for last year fell off considerably as compared with the previous year.

Canada is reported to have recovered from the depression of 1913-14. The exports of linen goods to that country for 1915 show a perceptible increase over 1914.

Australia maintained a good demand and conditions there are said to be encouraging. The high prices have practically killed the sale of linens in Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela.

The exports of linen goods to Brazil from the United Kingdom exceeded the previous year's trade by more than $140,000. This is probably due to the cutting off of supplies from Continental markets. Business with Argentina also proved to be satisfactory owing to the rapid recovery from the crisis of 1913–14.

Madeira has attracted a good deal of attention owing to the large purchases that were made, both direct and from New York, of white linens for embroidery purposes, probably to replace linens formerly shipped from Germany to German houses in Funchal. It is stated that the embroidered product afterwards reentered Germany, free of duty so far as the cloth was concerned, which gave these houses the control of the German market.

The demand from the small Continental countries has been chiefly for white linens and handkerchiefs. The Netherlands manufactured most of its own requirements, but Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries were good customers of Germany and Austria, both for household and tailoring goods. Owing to the stoppage of supplies from the latter countries they have now to turn to the United Kingdom for substitutes.

It is thought that when peace is assured the Allied Governments will stop buying, and this slackening of demand coupled with the renewal of normal supplies of Russian flax will probably cause a severe break in the prices of heavy linens, but it is not improbable that the break may be followed by recovery. Prices of fine linens

should hold much better than in the coarse fabrics, as Belgian flax is not likely to be plentiful for a long time.

Considering the difficulties attending the supply of raw material, and the high prices that have obtained for the visible supplies, the staple industry of this district has experienced a year or more than fair results.

Exports of Linen Piece Goods from United Kingdom.

The Board of Trade returns show the following value of exports of linen piece goods from the United Kingdom during the past two years:

Countries.	1914	1915	Countries.	1914	1915
Argentina	$579,016	$637,872	Dutch East Indies	$271,410	$239,836
Australia	2,323,875	2,358,612	Egypt	152,837	154,516
Belgium	118,319	190	France	176,046	1,603,789
Brazil	412,660	554,990	Germany	510,710	.....
British East Indies	1,129,826	1,205,417	Italy	192,796	175,218
British South Africa	306,911	388,969	Japan	174,347	84,512
British West Indies (including Bahamas and British Guiana)	93,938	68,116	Mexico	33,769	15,826
			Spain and Canaries	74,569	81,042
			Switzerland	104,761	99,578
Canada	1,067,861	1,248,184	United States	15,991,480	12,260,363
Colombia and Panama	185,526	92,551	Other countries	1,733,841	1,698,715
Cuba	870,451	783,078			
Denmark	170,152	276,135	Total	26,675,101	24,027,500

The following is a summary of the value of the exports of linen piece goods and other than piece goods from the United Kingdom:

Items.	1914	1915	Items.	1914	1915
LINEN PIECE GOODS.			OTHER THAN PIECE GOODS.		
Plain, unbleached or bleached	$23,243,012	$20,655,971	Handkerchiefs	$3,122,979	$2,565,234
Checked, printed, or dyed, and damasks or diaper	2,496,096	2,681,066	Table linen	2,594,063	2,216,408
			Thread for sewing	1,588,426	2,812,676
			Unenumerated articles	3,438,387	3,066,957
Sailcloth	935,993	690,463	Total	10,743,855	10,709,669
Total	26,675,101	24,027,500			

Exports Invoiced for the United States and Possessions.

The total value of exports from Belfast to the United States, exclusive of returned American goods, according to invoices certified at the Belfast consulate, was $15,823,964 in 1915, a decrease of $2,164,087, as compared with 1914. Of the total trade for the year, linen goods, which formed 83 per cent, fell off $2,081,795, as compared with 1914. Cotton manufactures, amounting to about 4 per cent of the aggregate trade, decreased $197,067. Yarn (flax), valued at about 2 per cent of the total, fell off $101,762. Flax, totaling $1,079,837, or nearly 7 per cent of all exports, shows an increase of $209,490 over 1914.

The high prices for all classes of linens during 1915 have checked the demand from the United States, and importers have only ordered sufficient quantities to meet actual requirements.

Returned American goods were valued at $10,827 in 1915, as compared with $16,155 in 1914. These goods consist of tobacco stems and phonographic records. The tobacco stems were returned as having no local demand, and the phonographic records in order to be remanufactured.

Linen manufactures, which constituted the bulk of shipments to the Philippine Islands, amounted to $13,212 in 1915, an increase of $665 over 1914. The principal exports to Porto Rico consisted chiefly of manufactures of flax, and were valued at $6,821 in 1915, as compared with $3,878 in 1914. There were no certified invoices covering shipments to Hawaii in 1915.

Principal Articles of Export for United States.

The principal articles invoiced at the Belfast consulate for the United States were as follows:

Articles.	1914	1915	Articles.	1914	1915
Cotton:			Flax, manufactures of—Continued.		
Damask	$127,626	$81,175	Thread	$164,863	$140,926
Embroideries	48,030	27,595	Woven-flax articles, n. e. s	3,206,641	2,446,854
Handkerchiefs—			Yarns—		
Not hemmed	1,178	19,631	Not finer than 8 lea	25,056	4,100
Hemmed or hemstitched	67,502	50,904	Finer than 8 lea and not finer than 80	278,013	182,743
Embroidered	169,780	174,024	Finer than 80	55,354	69,818
Cloth	273,479	206,178	Jute manufactures:		
Manufactures, n. e. s	171,719	90,450	Burlap		28,943
All other	33,511	45,831	Plain		16,205
Felt	43,588	61,132	Fusel oil	4,994	4,606
Flax:			Ginger ale	48,563	50,297
Not hackled	55,147	5,973	Grass seed	49,762	67,334
Hackled	783,229	1,045,384	Machinery	21,334	9,860
Noils	27,905	17,262	Nursery stock	22,141	19,399
Tow of	4,066	11,218	Paper stock	108,279	119,364
Flax, manufactures of:			Preserves	7,129	8,803
Embroideries and laces	236,970	71,389	Whisky	144,551	130,885
Fabrics, plain woven	6,718,670	6,152,079	All other articles	170,723	111,253
Fabrics, not plain woven	2,874,235	2,769,344	Total	17,988,051	15,823,964
Handkerchiefs—					
Not hemmed or hemmed only	63,023	68,990			
Hemstitched	645,349	523,055			
Embroidered	1,335,641	990,960			

Farmers Are Prosperous.

The returns made by the Department of Agriculture are considered highly satisfactory. The prices of live stock and agricultural produce were high and enabled the farmers to make good profits during the year. The moderate annuities now payable by the majority of the farmers for their holdings had aided them so far to meet successfully the special conditions and demands of the times, and the improvement and progress so marked for some years past had not been interrupted.

In most parts of Ireland, high prices were being readily paid for suitable farms when they came into the market, confidence being inspired by the remunerative prices for produce, though in some districts scarcity of labor continued.

With the exception of barley, which is not largely grown in the Province of Ulster (which includes the Belfast consular district), the yield of cereals for 1915 showed an increase over the previous year's return.

Acreage and Yield of Crops.

There was an increase of 9,759 acres in the area of wheat; 22,465 in that of oats; while barley shows a decrease of 2,032 acres as compared with 1914.

The total estimated yield of wheat was 352,854 hundredweight, an increase of 194,071 hundredweight over 1914; of oats, 8,670,888 hun-

dredweight, an increase of 925,322 hundredweight; and barley, 49,401 hundredweight, a decrease of 32,763 hundredweight.

The total yield of the flax crop grown in Ulster in 1915 is estimated at 1,524,380 stones (of 14 pounds), or about 98 per cent of the total production for all Ireland, as against 1,285,382 stones in 1914, while the area under this crop shows an increase of 3,874 acres. The crop was sown rather late owing to unfavorable weather and the difficulty of obtaining seed. Yields, though far from uniform, proved much better than were expected. The high prices obtained in 1914 were considerably exceeded in 1915.

The acreage under potatoes in Ulster in 1915 was 245,218, as against 245,045 acres in 1914. The yield for 1915 is estimated at 1,681,812 tons, as compared with 1,558,738 tons in 1914. It is stated that there was less disease than usual, and that the quality of the tubers was satisfactory.

The yield of first year's hay for Ulster in 1915 amounted to 361,150 tons, an increase of 29,282 tons over 1914; of permanent meadow hay, 624,532 tons, an increase of 31,871 tons; while second and third years' hay amounted to 123,186 tons, a decrease of 1,776 tons.

The production of turnips for Ulster in 1915 was 1,356,541 tons, being a decrease of 2,385 tons as compared with 1914; mangels amounted to 77,892 tons in 1915, an increase of 6,141 tons over 1914.

Food-Production Campaign.

During the summer of 1915 the Government appointed committees in England, Scotland, and Ireland, for the purpose of considering and reporting upon the food supplies of the United Kingdom and how these could best be maintained and increased. In an address delivered at Belfast it was pointed out that Ireland is preeminently an agricultural country, but that its annual average of imported foodstuffs amounted to $77,864,000 which could be produced in this country. Of this total, it is estimated that about $24,332,500 worth entered Belfast from other countries. The food imports in question consisted of wheat, flour, maize, oats, rye, eggs, butter, apples and pears, beef and mutton, bacon and hams, and sausages. It was stated that if Irish farmers would make a combined and resolute effort, they could effect a great reduction in every one of these particular imports.

Attention was also called to the extent to which arable land is cultivated. It is stated that Ireland is far behind Germany, Hungary, Austria, European Russia, Serbia, Belgium, Italy, France, Roumania, Bulgaria, Luxemburg, Portugal, and Denmark. Germany tills 65 per cent of its arable land, whereas Ireland cultivates only 16 per cent. As regards tillage, Down (forming part of this consular district) stands at the head of all the Irish counties with 33 per cent. As to Provinces, Ulster tills 25 per cent, Leinster 16 per cent, and Munster and Connaught each cultivate 12 per cent.

Nearly 70 per cent of the holdings in Ireland are under 30 acres, and much of the labor of such a farm is done by the family. On the larger farms, the question of labor is serious.

Reduction in Tonnage at Belfast.

According to the report of the Belfast Harbor Board, the tonnage of vessels arriving during 1915 was 3,023,532, a decrease of 306,588

tons compared with 1914. The tonnage of vessels cleared was 3,240,074, a decrease of 165,332 tons. This is the first year since 1901, excepting 1907, in which there has been a falling off in the amount of tonnage cleared. The decrease in 1915 is accounted for largely to the withdrawal of a number of vessels that were engaged on the cross channel trade, and to the decreased foreign service. The small mercantile output of the two local shipbuilding yards for the year, has also contributed to the falling-off in tonnage clearing from the port.

The shipping arrivals at Belfast from foreign ports with cargoes during 1915 numbered 237, and by nationality of vessels were: British, 173; Norwegian, 25; Russian, 10; Swedish, 10; Danish, 7; Greek, 6; French, 4; Italian, 1; and Spanish, 1. The cargoes brought by these vessels were: Sundry or general, 103; breadstuffs (including wheat, maize, barley, rye, flour, oats, etc.), 61; timber (including deals, boards, pitch pine, etc.), 26; flax, 24; petroleum, 6; sulphur ore, 5; phosphate and phosphate rock, 5; steel rails, 4; carbide of calcium, 1; copper ore, 1; granulated cork, 1.

Imports into Belfast.

The increase in the imports into Belfast in 1915 were chiefly confined to coal, cottonseed cake and cottonseed meal, cotton yarn and cotton cloth, feeding meal, hemp, sheet and plate iron, and manufactured tobacco. The exports with few exceptions were much below the figures for the preceding year.

The returns of the foreign trade of Belfast issued by the Harbor Commissioners make no distinction between goods coming from or going to English and Scottish ports and those from or to foreign countries. Moreover, the returns give only the quantities.

The following table shows the principal imports into Belfast in 1914 and 1915 in tons (2,240 pounds) unless otherwise noted:

Articles.	1914	1915	Articles.	1914	1915
Beverages:	*Tons.*	*Tons.*	Fruits and vegetables:	*Tons.*	*Tons.*
Ale and beer	9,220	5,017	Apples and pears	2,786	2,359
Porter	7,207	4,868	Dried fruits	3,036	2,105
Whisky	1,715	2,533	Green and preserved	6,065	6,119
Boots and shoes	3,040	3,003	Oranges	3,891	3,575
Carriages:			Onions	5,284	5,417
4-wheeled	49	26	Grain, flour, etc.:		
2-wheeled	59	31	Barley, unmanufactured	21,667	19,173
Motor	1,148	1,046	Bran	17,983	17,866
Cement	31,923	19,967	Cottonseed cake	8,181	10,316
Chemicals, drugs, etc.:			Cottonseed meal	5,130	6,793
Acid	718	374	Feeding meal	9,251	13,391
Bleaching powder	3,710	4,081	Flour	99,077	93,650
Chemicals and drugs	2,417	2,593	Indian corn	259,164	248,204
Oil—			Linseed cake	9,325	7,242
Paraffin and petroleum	35,870	29,523	Oats	9,276	4,867
Other	9,827	10,319	Rye	12,326	11,873
Paints	3,000	3,205	Wheat	75,534	55,356
Soda	4,538	5,951	Lard	1,395	1,300
Soda ash	4,258	4,036	Leather	1,355	1,255
Coal, coke, etc.:			Meats:		
Charcoal	328	288	Bacon	2,665	3,475
Coal	1,255,537	1,320,778	Beef	1,814	863
Coke	11,451	21,238	Fish, fresh	2,765	1,582
Confectionery	4,156	3,915	Metals, and manufactures of:		
Earthenware, glass, etc.:			Boilers, steam	510	339
Bottles	12,862	9,665	Bedsteads, iron	821	701
Glass	2,666	1,850	Bolts	2,042	1,597
Slates	5,778	4,691	Castings	12,202	6,761
Fertilizers:			Copper	1,387	1,052
Nitrate of soda	1,392	1,538	Hardware	5,517	4,210
Phosphate rock	18,560	17,321	Machines and machinery	13,451	10,594
			Nails	2,755	2,337

Articles.	1914	1915	Articles.	1914	1915
Metals, and manufactures of—Continued.	*Tons.*	*Tons.*	Textile materials, and manufactures of—Continued.	*Tons.*	*Tons.*
Pig iron	13,117	8,017	Flax	35,964	29,091
Rivets	4,722	3,842	Hemp	15,598	18,930
Sheet and plate iron	24,602	36,121	Linen	4,870	3,636
Steel	54,033	40,245	Tow	4,452	7,696
Wrought iron	31,263	24,229	Wool	693	758
Paper	16,031	15,754	Woolens	1,717	2,232
Seeds:			Yarns:		
Clover	261	444	Cotton	3,521	6,222
Flax	2,752	2,855	Linen	7,620	3,460
Grass	1,226	1,417	Woolen	710	789
Other	1,763	1,578			
Sheep	[a] 13,534	[a] 11,910	Wood, and manufactures of:		
Soap	3,282	3,443	Boards, planed	[b] 10,458	[b] 6,730
Sugar	35,211	34,255	Deals	[b] 66,882	[b] 58,035
Tobacco:			Empty boxes	14,255	11,880
Manufactured	756	763	Mahogany	2,544	289
Unmanufactured	5,451	7,190	Timber	[b] 37,615	[b] 14,345
Textile materials, and manufactures of:			Timber, wrought	[b] 1,768	[b] 1,101
Cotton goods	16,119	19,250			
Cotton, raw	14,950	4,887			

[a] Number.
[b] Loads (a load of square timber is 50 cubic feet; unhewn, 40 cubic feet; inch planks, 600 superficial feet).

Trade in Coal and Cotton and Cotton Goods.

The surplus coal on the market at the beginning of 1915 was quickly bought up, and with the steady demand, prices ruled high. Colliers of 500 to 1,000 tons are hard to obtain, and freights are very high. Among other circumstances that have tended to increase the cost to the consumer is that all workers engaged in the handling of coal have received substantial increases in wages in the course of the year.

According to returns, the imports of coal into Belfast in 1915 amounted to 1,320,778 tons, an increase of 234,759 tons as compared with 1914.

After the unsettling of the cotton market in 1914 there was little improvement observable until after the first six months of 1915. Since then, trading has been brisk. With yarns strong and likely to continue so, and a limited production of cloth of all kinds, the outlook is for a considerable advance in cotton manufactures. There has been a good business in miscellaneous cloths as well as specialties for export and for home consumption, generally at excellent prices.

Owing to the scarcity of the heavier numbers of linen yarns, many looms in this consular district have had to be run with cotton warps.

The imports of raw cotton into Belfast are practically all reexported to Northern Europe, without undergoing any process of manufacture. For last year 4,887 tons entered this port, a decrease of 10,063 tons as compared with 1914, while the reexports amounted to 5,091 tons, or a decrease of 8,309 tons from the previous year.

There were 6,222 tons of cotton yarn imported into Belfast in 1915, as against 3,521 tons in 1914. The import of cotton goods into Belfast increased from 16,119 tons in 1914 to 19,250 tons in 1915. Of the total in 1915, 19,212 tons were coastwise, with only 38 tons foreign.

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Difficulty in Securing Woolens.

The great difficulty with the woolen trade has been to obtain goods from the manufacturers and be delivered in reasonable time. The difficulty in obtaining supplies of woolens from across channel has caused many local firms to make their purchases from Irish manufacturers, and it is hoped that having secured this extra trade, a good deal of it may be retained in the future. Woolen goods of all kinds were never before so high in price, and as raw wool, toward the close of 1915, showed a further increase of 10 per cent, values of goods are expected to advance accordingly.

During the last six months of the year old stocks of woolen goods—blankets, flannels, men's ready-made clothing, woolen cloths, and tweeds—were in great demand, with the result that stocks are very low.

Imports of woolens into Belfast in 1915 were 2,232 tons, as against 1,717 tons in 1914.

Grain and Flour Trade.

Prices of wheat at the opening of last year were moderate, but within a short time there was a marked advance, and at the end of February values had increased by more than 20 per cent. This was partly caused by large purchases made on behalf of the Government. During the succeeding two months the fluctuations were comparatively small, and trading was not extensive until the end of April and early in May, when the highest point of the year was reached. The year closed with white descriptions averaging about 5 per cent, and strong, Canadian qualities, 8 per cent below the highest prices paid in May. The advance during the latter part of the year was partly due to the higher freights, but chiefly to the keen competition for available supplies in the United States and Canada. Supplies were practically limited to shipments from Argentina, Canada, and the United States for the first six months, then from India for a short period, and for the remaining months of the year the trade was confined to wheat exported from Canada and the United States.

The imports of wheat into Belfast amounted to 55,356 tons in 1915, as against 75,534 tons in 1914.

Abnormal conditions prevailed in the flour trade during the year, and in consequence business in this commodity has been unsettled to a large extent. Compared with the pre-war period, the cost of flour has gone up considerably, and this change is reflected in higher prices for bread. The bakers had to face a difficult situation, for while there was more than an ample world supply of wheat, prices of flour were out of all proportion to the quantity disposable.

The total imports of flour into Belfast in 1915 were 93,650 tons, as compared with 99,077 tons in 1914.

Record Price for Indian Corn.

Indian corn was obtainable at moderate prices at the beginning of 1915, but quickly advanced and by the end of April reached $9.73 per quarter. However, this advance only lasted for a short period, as the demand proved disappointing, and prices gradually declined between the end of May and the latter part of June, when $6.93 per quarter was accepted for Argentine corn. Values fluctuated

during the following three months, and later prices advanced until they reached record figures. For a cargo afloat $11.37 per quarter was paid just before the close of the year, and shippers asked even higher prices for forward loading. The advance was caused by the rise in freights, the rate from the River Plata to any of the principal ports in the United Kingdom being $29.81 per ton, as compared with $10.95 per ton, the lowest point of the year. Formerly $4.87 per ton was considered a profitable freight, and on many occasions it ranged $3.04 to $3.65 per ton.

The Indian corn imports totaled 248,204 tons, as against 259,164 tons in 1914.

Advance in the Price of Pigs.

Soon after the outbreak of war attention was called to the marked falling off in the number of pigs in Ireland, and to the large demand at high prices for pork that would probably exist. In January, 1915, pigs were selling at $14.35 to $14.60 per hundredweight, which proved to be the lowest prices of the year. A marked advance was recorded in March, when the price went to $16.55. Prices during June fluctuated between $17.52 and $18, and in August the highest price of the year was reached, $19.47, representing an advance of 30 per cent within six months. The price of the cured meat followed closely that of the uncured. Rolled bacon, which was selling at an average price of $21.17 per hundredweight in January, advanced to $27 in August and September, and short-cut hams (smoked) during the same period reached $32.60. Prices have since declined, bacon having been sold in December, 1915, at $25.79, and hams at $30.17. Danish meats during the last five months of the year were scarce, which materially helped the demand for the Irish product.

Trade in Butter, Sugar, and Other Provisions.

Butter showed much variation in price and supply. Toward the close of the year, after quotations had gone up considerably, the action of Denmark in deciding to permit the export of butter had the effect of bringing about a sudden reduction in price. Notwithstanding this, however, it commands $0.41 per pound at present (February, 1916). Eggs increased steadily in price, and at the commencement of the winter season they were quoted at about $0.24 per dozen above the pre-war price. Tea, as a result of the newly imposed duty of about 8 cents per pound, went up in price considerably.

Local consumption seems to have been very slightly, if at all, affected by the increased cost. The bulk of the demand has been for the better grades.

Sugar was practically the only commodity that did not fluctuate to any appreciable extent, due to the Government fixing a wholesale price. Cube sugar was sold the middle of February, 1916, at $0.12 per pound or $0.04 per pound higher than granulated sugar. In pre-war times the difference in price between these two kinds of sugar was not more than $0.01 per pound.

There was a shortage of bottled preserves, pickles, and condiments, also of jam pots. Confectionery went up to an abnormally high figure owing to the advance in the price of sugar. In the case of jams, soft fruits were, as a rule, higher in price than in pre-war times, but the stoned fruits were moderately cheap.

Limited Stocks of Timber.

Timber merchants in Belfast claim that stocks are much smaller than usual because there had been no speculative buying, firms holding off owing to the constantly rising prices. It is stated that the strictest economy must be observed in conserving present stock. A timber famine would react at once on the building trades, the box makers, and inevitably affect the linen and other industries. In Swedish whitewoods, which were used extensively for manufacturing purposes, the contracts had to be made f. o. b. months ahead. Stocks of Baltic white and red woods, used for flooring, sheeting, and general joinery work, and Canadian deals, for which there was a fair demand for box making and like purposes, were very low. Pitch pine from Pensacola, Mobile, and other American centers, for which there has always been a fair demand in the shipyards and for house building, was only held in small quantities at the close of the year. Canadian pine, which was exclusively used in joinery work, was equally low, but there was not a great demand for it. It is stated that the average advance in the price of timber since the outbreak of war has been 130 per cent.

In 1915 there were 14,345 loads of timber imported into Belfast, while the figures for the previous year were 37,615 loads. The imports of deals into Belfast in 1915 decreased by 8,847 loads, and of boards, planed, 3,728 loads, as compared with 1914.

Trading Generally Through British Centers.

Imports into Belfast, with the exception of shipments in bulk, are generally made through branch houses or jobbers in English or Scotch centers.

Owing to the comparatively small quantities in which purchases are usually made, Belfast firms consider it to their advantage to buy in this way rather than to import direct from foreign markets, as they procure quicker deliveries and better credit terms. In many lines of trade they can purchase on what is practically an open credit, getting a discount ranging from 2½ to 5 per cent for cash in 30 days.

Among the principal American articles that have hitherto enjoyed a good sale in Belfast, though few direct imports of them have been made, are agricultural implements and machinery, cotton-seed meal, drugs, canned and fresh fruits, canned vegetables, tinned meats, household hardware and sundry household articles, edged tools, glasswares and glass containers, surgical and dental instruments, toilet articles, bristle brushes, motor cars and motorcycles, musical instruments, leather, underwear, hosiery, typewriters, cash registers, and sewing machines.

The principal articles that have been imported direct to Belfast from the United States are grains, flour, meal, cottonseed cake, phosphate rock, and timber. During the latter part of 1914, following the outbreak of the war, the curtailment of shipments from the continent, and the shortage of stocks in Great Britain of various commodities, caused many dealers to turn to the United States for their supplies. Excessive freight rates, however, and the refusal of many American exporters to quote other than f. o. b. in the United States have restricted imports from that country.

Increased Bank Deposits.

The position of the banks having their head offices in Belfast is a fair index of the prosperity and stability of the city. It is stated that the combined balance sheet of these institutions, compared with the previous year, shows a marked expansion as regards deposits, note issues, and investments, and an equally notable contraction in advances to customers and bills discounted. The proportion of cash to liabilities is said to be over 21 per cent and of investments to liabilities over 40 per cent, or over 61 per cent, in cash and investments. Note circulation stood at a record figure. The increase was, in a large measure, due to the practical withdrawal of gold from circulation, and the fact that bank notes are now legal tender. It was also to some extent due to agricultural developments and the enhanced prices of Irish products. The considerable expenditure on Government account has also added to the demand for currency. The increase in deposits reflects to a great extent the prosperity of the agricultural classes, while the large decrease in advances to customers and bills discounted, following the decline in 1914, indicates the prosperous condition of trade generally. Under ordinary circumstances, the great advance in the price of all commodities would have involved a demand for increased banking accommodation, but, on the contrary, there is a marked decrease in the demand for such accommodation. Local bank shares are said to have shown remarkable steadiness, and where there was depreciation, it was only small.

Soon after the outbreak of war the Government took steps to safeguard the financial interests of the country and prevent a panic. Among the measures adopted was the fixing of minimum prices in certain securities, chiefly those known as "gilt-edged," and those with fixed rates of interest. Although locally not many stocks came under the minimum-price rule, in numerous cases debenture and preference issues felt the pressure and suffered severely.

Regarding local stocks, those with fixed rates of interest experienced the greatest depreciation, and in other cases, while the gains and losses were mixed, prices on the whole have been well maintained.

Exports from Belfast.

The principal exports from Belfast during 1914 and 1915 were as follows, the ton being of 2,240 pounds:

Articles.	1914	1915	Articles.	1914	1915
	Tons.	*Tons.*		*Tons.*	*Tons.*
Aerated waters	10,013	8,561	Feeding meal	7,822	9,150
Ale and beer	2,578	842	Felt	19,454	17,129
Bacon	9,308	10,518	Flax	4,355	5,697
Barley, unmanufactured	3,579	530	Flour	11,055	8,268
Biscuits	1,465	1,413	Hams	2,959	3,243
Bran	1,745	949	Hay	5,377	2,999
Butter	3,051	3,162	Herrings, fresh	177	810
Cattle	[a] 151,437	[a] 148,782	Herrings, salt	726	1,728
Coal [b]	16,376	14,756	Hides and skins	2,898	2,400
Confectionery	1,875	1,286	Horses	[a] 8,363	[a] 5,590
Cordage, new	9,259	8,716	Indian corn [b]	69,464	40,688
Cottons	7,419	7,391	Iron castings	2,113	1,295
Cottonseed cake	1,996	2,043	Iron ore	31,102	34,199
Cottonseed meal	369	351	Iron, scrap	19,806	25,176
Cotton, raw [b]	13,400	5,091	Lard	1,703	1,356
Eggs	14,433	15,986	Linen	58,996	55,311
Empty boxes	17,360	14,163	Machinery and machines	9,761	8,832

[a] Number. [b] Reexport.

Articles.	1914	1915	Articles.	1914	1915
	Tons.	*Tons.*		*Tons.*	*Tons.*
Manures, artificial	9,096	7,070	Ropes, new	3,934	4,348
Meal	2,718	3,704	Salt, crushed	6,340	1,840
Meal, indian	4,060	2,810	Sand, molding	8,007	5,702
Meat, coarse	3,400	2,898	Seed, grass	18,988	16,394
Oars and spars	[a] 2,101	.....	Sheep and lambs	[a] 20,723	[a] 19,691
Oats	3,188	12,581	Thread	1,873	2,573
Oil, paraffin and petroleum	2,352	1,800	Timber	[b] 10,173	[b] 3,200
Paper	8,905	8,538	Timber, wrought	[b] 305	[b] 426
Pigs	[a] 6,269	[a] 7,296	Tobacco, manufactured	4,775	4,502
Pitch	2,517	921	Waste, flax, hemp, and tow	9,642	7,340
Pork	1,326	2,807	Wheat	2,147	2,250
Potatoes	99,822	81,669	Whisky	25,603	23,095
Poultry	2,758	3,594	Yarn, linen	9,207	7,547
Preserves	2,440	2,363	Yeast	4,037	3,625
Pyrites	6,760	6,496			

[a] Number.
[b] Loads (a load of square timber is 50 cubic feet; unhewn, 40 cubic feet; inch planks, 600 superficial feet).

Fish Landed on the Irish Coasts.

The total value of fish landed on the Irish coasts during the 12 months ended December 31, 1915, was $1,493,018, an increase of $305,904 over the figures for 1914. Herring, mackerel, and cod, in the order named, are the largest catches on the Irish coasts. Of the total catch, herrings, amounting to $827,651, show an increase of $370,964, while mackerel, amounting to $268,280, and cod, amounting to $66,043, show decreases of $12,984 and $13,485, respectively, as compared with 1914.

The following table shows the total value of fish landed on Irish coasts during the calendar years 1914 and 1915:

Kinds of fish.	1914	1915	Kinds of fish.	1914	1915
Brill	$5,012	$3,144	Ray or skate	$16,459	$15,870
Soles	36,231	32,503	Sprats	457	404
Turbot	12,079	8,482	Whiting	33,876	47,322
Cod	79,528	66,043	Other fish	40,144	43,842
Conger eel	15,860	11,962	Crabs	3,917	3,188
Haddock	14,940	7,421	Lobsters	66,788	42,645
Hake	25,306	26,070	Mussels	6,215	4,409
Herring	456,687	827,651	Oysters	5,154	4,302
Ling	11,110	5,139	Other shellfish	13,003	13,485
Mackerel	281,264	268,280			
Plaice	63,084	60,856	Total	1,187,114	1,493,018

Decrease in Emigration.

The number of emigrants (natives of Ireland) who left the Irish ports during 1915 were 6,982 males and 4,092 females, making a total of 11,074, or a decrease of 9,240 (males, 3,678; females, 5,562), as compared with 1914. Of the total number for last year, 7,096 were destined for the United States, 347 for Australia, 597 for Canada, and 2,898 for Great Britain—1,954 going to England and Wales, and 944 to Scotland. From this consular district (Ulster) there were 3,819 emigrants in 1915, a falling off of 2,793 from the previous year.

Operation of Public Utilities.

Electricity, tramways, and gas are the chief remunerative sources of the Belfast Corporation. The tramway service has been reduced, and owing to the great increase in the price of coal and materials it has been found necessary to advance the price of gas by $0.08 per 1,000 cubic feet, making the new price (deducting 20 per cent dis-

count), $0.48 per 1,000 cubic feet. There has also been an increase of $0.01 per unit for lighting, and ½ cent per unit for power in the price of electricity.

The tramway revenue for the year ended March 31, 1915, was $1,313,955, as against $1,323,688 (the largest revenue on record) in the previous year. The working expenses were $759,174, as compared with $778,640 in 1913–14, and the car mileage, 6,432,000, as against 6,865,000 in the previous year.

Profits from the gas service during the financial year ended March 31, 1915, were the lowest realized for many years, and but for the balance of $111,930 brought forward from the previous year the gas fund would not have been able to pay the charges placed upon it, namely, $48,665 in aid of rates and $55,478 for interest and sinking fund on the new city hall.

Public Markets, Abattoir, and Water Supply.

There are 13 public markets in Belfast controlled by the city corporation. In addition to these there is a toll-collecting office with weighbridges on each road at the city boundary. The total returns from the markets for 1914 were $66,623, being a record figure, whereas the receipts from the toll-collecting offices for the same year amounted to $17,641.

The municipality in 1913 completed and opened a new abattoir, at an approximate cost of $253,000. The premises cover an area extending over 3 acres, and are equipped with the most modern and humane appliances for the slaughter of animals, while the meat is cleaned under the most hygienic conditions. According to the returns of the abattoir there were 96,575 animals slaughtered in 1915, as against 96,971 during the previous year. The tolls amounted to $15,380 in 1915 and $15,509 in 1914.

Work on the project of a storage reservoir in the Silent Valley has been suspended for the present. The new sources of water supply are rivers about 40 miles distant from Belfast. It is stated that the water does not require a purification plant. The outlay on the works at present is $10,321,997, and an additional sum of about $2,433,000 will be required to complete the new works. The reservoir is to have a capacity of 300,000 million gallons, or 400 million gallons more than the whole of the existing reservoirs, and will serve a population of 800,000.

Increased Railway Traffic.

The railway receipts in the aggregate for 1915 for this district show an increase over the previous year. Against this increase, however, has been the increased prices for all the materials used, advances in wages, and other provisions to meet the increased cost of living.

Of the railways operating in the Belfast consular district, the report of the Great Northern Railway (Ireland), with a mileage of 561, shows that there were 13,867 more first-class passengers and 77,735 more third-class passengers carried during last year, while the second class shows a decrease of 24,491, as compared with 1914. Notwithstanding the increase in the working expenses, this company declared a dividend of 5½ per cent for the year, and carried forward a balance greater than that of the previous year by $22,191.

The receipts for 1915 of the Belfast & County Down Railway Co., having only 80 miles, totaled $914,873, as compared with $869,420 for the previous year, or an increase of $45,453. This company declared a dividend of 6½ per cent for the year.

LONDONDERRY.

By Consular Agent Philip O'Hagan, March 28.

The chief local industries are the manufacture of shirts, collars, corsets, ladies' underclothing, hosiery, and shipbuilding. The local shirt factories were chiefly employed during 1915 on Government work.

The exports from Londonderry to the United States, according to invoices certified at the consular agency, were valued at $151,865 in 1915, compared with $191,546 for 1914; of the total for last year pickled herring amounted to $148,819.

Shipping between this port and the United States ceased in October, 1914.

There has been no material change in the number of small coasting vessels, chiefly steamers of about 300 tons register, that run from here around the Donegal and Sligo coasts, picking up part cargoes at various places in those counties and taking them to English and Scottish ports. They return here with mixed cargoes, coal being the principal cargo.

Several cargoes of maize arrived here during 1915 from Argentina, and a few cargoes of timber from Canada and Norway, but these arrivals were smaller than in former years.

Revenues of the Port—Decreased Tonnage.

The revenues of this port from tonnage duties and rates on goods for 1915 were $98,205, compared with $99,763 in 1914 and $109,788 in 1913.

The registered tonnage of vessels trading to the port for 1915 was 342,129, against 810,465 tons in 1914 and 978,846 tons in 1913. This decrease in tonnage is due to failure of ships in the United States trade to call at the port.

Prior to October, 1914, an Anchor Line steamer left this port every week for New York, and a steamer of the Allan Line left here every fortnight for Boston, Mass. There were corresponding arrivals here from the United States.

Shipments of Live Stock.

The live-stock shipments from Londonderry to cross-channel ports for the last five years were as follows:

Year.	Cattle.	Sheep.	Pigs.	Horses.	Total (including goats, etc.).
1911	57,171	23,116	2,241	264	83,801
1912	50,406	21,231	3,197	380	75,222
1913	114,326	33,193	1,530	384	119,375
1914	97,017	24,305	4,890	445	126,637
1915	93,612	28,297	5,194	379	127,496

The cattle trade was exceptionally brisk in the earlier part of 1915, and farmers and graziers in this district reaped good returns on their cattle sales. Owing to the large arrivals of frozen meat in England and Scotland later in the year, however, the price of beef began to drop and continued so up to the end of the year. The total of the year's shipments, however, represents a good average, and together with the large shipments of the two previous years has naturally depleted to some extent the cattle of this consular district. According to the board of agriculture returns, however, it appears that this depletion has taken place only in the animals of 2 years old and upward, and that there has been a steady increase in the number of younger cattle and calves. This, together with the effect of a board of agriculture regulation prohibiting the export of springing cows, makes the position of the cattle trade hopeful.

Demand for Pork.

The prices for pork reached record figures during 1915. This was largely due to war conditions and to the fact that the United States, Canada, and Denmark did not enter into the same competition as heretofore. Owing to the largely restricted supplies of feedstuffs, which were chiefly obtained from British millers, Denmark had to reduce its number of pigs by almost one-half. The number of pigs killed in Denmark during 50 weeks in 1914 was 2,565,078, while for the same period in 1915 the number was only 1,935,496, or a decrease of 629,582. On the other hand, the number of pigs exported from all Ireland during 50 weeks in 1915 was 166,964, as compared with 132,468 in 1914, or an increase of 34,496. Had the Irish supplies been equal to the demand these figures would have been greatly increased.

Before the war there was usually a consignment of about 50,000 pigs weekly from Denmark to the British markets, and at the end of 1915 there was not one-tenth of that number.

Although prices in the Londonderry market for pork kept steadily advancing during the year, farmers here were never in a position to meet all the demands of the curers, and consequently the competition in the local pork markets of this district, and not only in the city of Londonderry but in surrounding towns, such as Strabane, Omagh, Dungannon, Limavady, Coleraine, etc., reached an acute stage on several occasions.

The farmers of this district experienced a most prosperous year, as all the produce of the farm, including flax, as well as cattle, pigs, poultry, butter, eggs, cereals, etc., reached abnormal prices.

American Shoes and Motor Cars—Financial Condition of the People.

There are several good boot and shoe stores in the city, all of which stock American boots and shoes, but these goods all come here through English and Scotch importing houses. There is no direct trade in boots and shoes between the northwest of Island and the United States.

There is a large number of American motor cars used in this district.

The dependants of those that entered the Government service are drawing considerable amounts weekly from the Government. This

money coupled with the earnings of the female members of the various families, who work in the local shirt, collar, hosiery, and underclothing factories, has left the working class households the handling of more ready money than ever. Therefore these people, who are liberal spenders, have now considerable sums of money to spend, and the various retail trades here are all doing a brisk and lucrative business.

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